

Growing science centres in countries where they are missing: lessons from Africa to inform the ASPAC region

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The global science centre community has long advocated for the growth of science centres in countries and regions where they are not yet established, as evidenced by declarations from Science Centre World Summits and Congresses. One region of particular focus globally has been Africa, where science centres have experienced rapid growth in South Africa but are only beginning to be established more widely on the continent. Within ASPAC's geographic umbrella, another region lacking science centres is the South Pacific – of the 19 members of the Pacific Islands Forum only Australia and New Zealand have science centres (to the best of the author's knowledge and research).

This session will share research on capacity building and science centre development in Africa as part of the Australian National University's *Science Circus Africa* initiative. The research investigated both needs (problems) and assets (helpers) of centres, emerging centres and outreach programs, and what science communication development advocates can learn from the wider development field. It will then discuss how findings from this are informing approaches to a similar Pacific capacity building effort, *Science Circus Pacific*. It will particularly focus on three key aspects that can help the science centre movement grow in developing countries: (1) individual pioneers, (2) host institutions for centres such as cultural museums, research institutes and universities, and (3) the wider role of government. Pacific and African examples of these key aspects will be shared, along with discussion of how developed countries and established science centres can play a constructive role.